

**Outline of
the Messages for the Full-time Training
in the Fall Term of 2023**

**GENERAL SUBJECT:
THE CRUCIAL POINTS OF THE TRUTH IN PAUL'S EPISTLES—
FIRST CORINTHIANS**

Message Seven

Enjoying Christ as the Reality of the Feast of Unleavened Bread

Scripture Reading: Exo. 12:15-20; 1 Cor. 5:6-8; Luke 12:1; Matt. 16:6, 12; Mark 8:15; 1 Tim. 1:3-4; 5:1-2

I. The children of Israel were to observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread as a continuation of the Feast of the Passover (Exo. 12:15-20; 1 Cor. 5:6-8); leaven signifies sin, evil things, negative things, evil doctrines, and different and strange teachings (Matt. 16:6, 11-12; Gal. 5:9; 1 Tim. 1:3-4; Heb. 13:9; Lev. 2:4, 11):

- A. The Feast of Unleavened Bread as the continuation of the Passover lasted for seven days, a period of completion, signifying the entire period of our Christian life, from the day of our conversion to the day of our rapture.
- B. This is a long feast, which we must keep not with the sin of our old nature, the old leaven, but with unleavened bread, which is the Christ of our new nature as our nourishment and enjoyment; only Christ is the life supply of sincerity and truth, absolutely pure, without mixture, and full of reality.
- C. The feast is a time for the enjoyment of the banquet; the entire Christian life should be such a feast, such an enjoyment of Christ as our banquet, the rich supply of life—Exo. 12:16, 18-19.
- D. Spiritually speaking, we all are like Mephibosheth, the grandson of King Saul (2 Sam. 4:4), who was crippled in his feet; like Mephibosheth, we can dine at the King's table, enjoying His banquet, even though we are still crippled (9:1-13); our two feet are lame, but they are *under the table*; whenever we look at ourselves, we discover that we are lame, and we become discouraged; instead, we need to turn away from self-introspection and look only at the unsearchable riches of Christ on the Lord's table and enjoy Him as our unleavened banquet (S. S. 2:8—3:5; Eph. 3:8).
- E. No leaven was to be seen with the children of Israel; this signifies that we must deal with the sin of which we are conscious, with any sin that is manifested, that is seen—Exo. 13:7; 12:19; 1 Cor. 5:7a; Heb. 12:1-2a.
- F. To deal with manifested sin is to keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread; if we tolerate sin once it is exposed, we will lose the enjoyment of the fellowship of God's people—Exo. 12:19; 1 Cor. 5:13.
- G. The only way to eliminate sin is by humbling oneself as a sinner before God (Prov. 20:9; Eccl. 7:20; Luke 18:9-14) and by daily eating Christ as the crucified, resurrected, and sinless life, signified by the unleavened bread (John 6:57, 63; Psa. 119:140; Jer. 15:16).

II. "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy"; the teaching of the Pharisees was hypocritical—Luke 12:1; Matt. 23:13-15, 23, 25-32:

- A. The principle of Babylon is hypocrisy (vv. 25-32; Luke 12:1); the apostate church is not built in a solid way with gold, pearls, and precious stones; she is only gilded with these treasures as ornaments for outward display and a false appearance (Rev. 17:4, 6):
 - 1. The significance of Achan's sin was his coveting a beautiful Babylonian garment in his seeking to improve himself, to make himself look better, for the sake of appearance; whenever we put on a garment that does not match our actual condition, we are in the principle of Babylon—Josh. 7:21; Matt. 6:1-6; 15:7-8.

2. This was the sin of Ananias and Sapphira, who lied to the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:1-11); they did not love the Lord very much, but they wanted to be looked upon as those who greatly loved the Lord; they were just pretending; they were not willing to offer everything cheerfully to God, but before man they acted as if they had offered all.

B. Everything done in falsehood to receive glory from man is done in the principle of the harlot, not in the principle of the bride—John 5:44; 12:42-43:

1. It is a great matter for God's children to be delivered from pretending before man in order to receive glory from man—Matt. 6:1-6; 15:7-8.

2. False consecration is sin, and false spirituality is also sin; true worship is in spirit and in truthfulness—John 4:24; 5:41, 44; 7:18; 12:42-43; 2 Cor. 4:5; 1 Thes. 2:4-6.

III. “Watch and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees” (Matt. 16:6); “then they understood that He did not say to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees” (v. 12):

A. The teaching of the Sadducees denied the resurrection, angels, and spirits (Acts 23:8), like today's modernism.

B. Hence, both the teaching of the Pharisees and the teaching of the Sadducees were impure and evil and were likened to leaven, which was not to be seen among God's people—Exo. 13:7.

IV. “Beware of...the leaven of Herod”—Mark 8:15:

A. The leaven of Herod was his corruption and injustice in politics; Herod's slaying of John the Baptist indicates Satan's hatred, expressed by the darkness and injustice of the worldly power, toward the faithful forerunner of the Slave-Savior—6:26-27.

B. We should not play politics in our contact with the saints or our work in the churches; to play politics is to take the way of pretense and “diplomacy,” using our cleverness to avoid offending others; instead, we should contact the saints in an honest and faithful way and in all purity to minister Christ as life to them—1 Tim. 5:1-2; 2 Cor. 3:3, 6.

V. Satan leavens the church with different and strange teachings, that is, with teachings other than the teaching of the eternal economy of God, the teaching of the apostles—1 Tim. 1:3-4; Acts 2:42; Heb. 13:9; Matt. 13:33.

VI. Satan leavens the church with hierarchy, with those who love to be first among the brothers; these ones have not learned to be blended with others (to fellowship with others by passing through the cross, doing and speaking everything by the Spirit in order to dispense Christ for the sake of the reality of the Body of Christ); they can only tell others what to do, and they think that they are something when they are nothing, thus deceiving themselves—3 John 9; Gal. 6:2-3; cf. Matt. 20:25-28; 23:6-11:

A. We should never hunt to be the first in any work for the Lord out of envying others; rivalry in the Lord's work is not only a sign of ambition but also a sign of pride—Luke 17:10; Phil. 1:15; Gal. 5:25-26.

B. Thinking more highly of ourselves than we ought to think is another form of pride (Rom. 12:3); self-boasting, self-exaltation, self-glorification, self-will, self-justification, self-righteousness, and lusting after vainglory are all ugly and base expressions of pride (Gal. 5:25-26).

C. Wanting to be great and not to be a servant and wanting to be the first and not to be a slave are also a sign of pride—Matt. 20:26-27.

VII. Satan leavens the church with those who lord it over the saints by replacing Christ as the Lord in their lives—1 Pet. 5:3; Mark 10:42-44; cf. 2 Cor. 4:5:

A. To tell others where they should move or what they should do without leading them to first pray and honor the Lord is to insult the lordship and headship of Christ.

B. To move to any place or to do anything just because a certain brother told you where to move and what to do, apart from going to the Lord in prayer, is to insult the lordship and headship of Christ.

- C. The only exception to this is seen in the organic relationship between Paul and his small group of co-workers, whom he could direct, with the Lord's authority, to go to certain places and to come to be with him; Brother Watchman Nee followed this pattern that was similar to Paul's relationship with Timothy; only about ten people coordinated with Brother Nee in this way—1 Tim. 1:3; 1 Cor. 4:17; 16:10; 2 Tim. 4:21.

VIII. Satan leavens the church through the speaking of reviling words:

- A. We should not speak reviling words; to revile is to rebuke or criticize harshly or abusively; to revile is to assail someone with abusive language; to revile is not only to rebuke someone but also to sharply wound him and stamp him with open rudeness or contempt arising from arrogance—Gal. 5:14-15, 25-26.
- B. Revilers intimidate and subjugate the saints by an overbearing manner or domineering speech; revilers are ones who beat their fellow slaves, which means that they habitually mistreat fellow believers; revilers will not inherit the kingdom of God—Matt. 24:45-51; 1 Cor. 6:9-10.
- C. Those who take in reviling words bear the same responsibility as those who speak reviling words; in order for the church to maintain the oneness, the brothers and sisters must withstand reviling words—cf. Num. 6:6.

IX. Satan leavens the church through those who do not closely follow the teaching and speaking of the ministry of the age through the Lord's up-to-date ministry of the word; our God, who is living and moving, always moves by His speaking—2 Tim. 3:10; 1 Tim. 4:6; Amos 3:7; Ezek. 1:3; 3:1-4.

X. Satan leavens the church with the practice of merely and outwardly following one controlling person instead of intrinsically and inwardly following one controlling vision, the vision of the eternal economy of God—Acts 26:19.

XI. Satan leavens the church with localism; some may have the attitude that their local church is independent and autonomous and should not be interfered with—this is localism, and this is not a church in the fellowship of the Body of Christ:

- A. An independent local church is actually a local sect; we must apply the cross to any localism in church practice; some misuse the truth of the ground of the church to build up their own empire, their own monarchy.
- B. A major element of the ground of the church is the reality of the Spirit, who is the living reality of the Divine Trinity (1 John 5:6; John 16:13); through this Spirit the ground of the church is applied in life and not in legality.
- C. We may think that the local churches are the goal of God's economy; however, they are not the goal but the procedure that God takes to reach the goal and highest peak of God's economy, which is the reality of the Body of Christ.
- D. We need to be in the local churches so that we can be ushered, or brought, into the reality of the Body of Christ; the churches should come together frequently to blend together for the reality of the Body of Christ.
- E. God has blended the Body together so that there would be no division in the Body (1 Cor. 12:12, 24-25); the word *blended* means "adjusted," "harmonized," "tempered," and "mingled."
- F. In order to have the reality of blending among us, we have to go through the cross and be by the Spirit in order to dispense Christ into one another for the sake of the Body of Christ; blending means that we lose all our distinctions.

XII. "The Lord has shown me that He has prepared many brothers who will serve as fellow slaves with me in a blended way. I feel that this is the Lord's sovereign provision for His Body, and the up-to-date way to fulfill His ministry" (*The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1994-1997, vol. 5, "A Letter of Fellowship with Thanks," March 24, 1997, Witness Lee, p. 525*).